

Date of Hearing: April 20, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Patrick O'Donnell, Chair

AB 2064 (Irwin) – As Amended March 3, 2022

SUBJECT: Pupil instruction: media literacy: instructional materials

SUMMARY: Establishes the Media Literacy through Critical Thinking Program at the California State Library, to support media literacy and navigation of issues of public health and representation among students and their families. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes the Media Literacy through Critical Thinking Program at the California State Library, to be administered by the State Librarian, contingent upon an appropriation of public or private funds for its purpose.
- 2) Establishes the following purposes of the program:
 - a) To support media literacy for pupils and their families through critical thinking and source evaluation strategies that apply to multiple languages; and
 - b) To develop literacy skills for pupils and their families to help navigate issues of public health and representation.
- 3) Requires the State Librarian to do all of the following to administer the program:
 - a) Develop a list of recommended books, articles, digital multimedia resources, and any other instructional materials to supplement the state-recommended English language arts curriculum framework, and is required to include recreational reading selections for children;
 - b) Ensure that the list is developed in consultation with various groups, including teachers, librarians, parents, writers, publishers, and employees of the California State Library;
 - c) Develop a method of involving students and their families in the program and an appropriate form of recognition for pupils and their families who volunteer to participate in the program and who succeed in the program. Requires that rewards and related recognition activities be funded with funds received from private sources; and
 - d) Expend any private funds to obtain and make available to the public the books, articles, digital multimedia resources, and any other instructional materials on the list.
- 4) Requires that funds appropriated or received for purposes of this article be deposited in the Media Literacy through Critical Thinking Program Fund in the State Treasury.
- 5) Makes findings and declarations related to the importance of media literacy.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Defines the following terms:
 - a) “Digital citizenship” means a diverse set of skills related to current technology and social media, including the norms of appropriate, responsible, and healthy behavior; and
 - b) “Media literacy” means the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and use media and encompasses the foundational skills that lead to digital citizenship.
- 2) Requires the California Department of Education (CDE), by July 1, 2019, to make available to school districts on its website a list of resources and instructional materials on media literacy, including media literacy professional development programs for teachers.
- 3) Establishes the California State Library, under the direction of the State Librarian, and lists among the responsibilities of the office to purchase and maintain materials and equipment as necessary to carry out California State Library programs and services consistent with well-established library standards.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. The author states, “Propaganda, misinformation and ‘fake news’ have the potential to polarize public opinion, undermine commonsense public health measures, promote violent extremism and hate speech, and ultimately, to undermine trust in the democratic processes. The COVID-19 pandemic and 2020 Presidential Election have made clear that large groups of people are unable to agree on basic facts, such as Joe Biden being legitimately elected or the efficacy of masks and vaccines to prevent transmission and infection of COVID-19.

AB 2064 will recognize and uplift librarians as ideal partners for our K-12 educators in the fight against mis- and disinformation. The bill tasks the California State Library with developing toolkits to teach pupils and their families basic media literacy skills through critical thinking that can be used across disciplines and languages. The bill is modeled after the California Reading Initiative and will require the State Librarian to develop a list of recommended books, articles, digital multimedia resources, and any other instructional materials to support media literacy instruction through critical thinking, which will then be made available to school, municipal, and county libraries across the state.”

Who develops curriculum for California public schools? California’s public school curriculum is based on content standards in various subjects, including English-Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, History-Social Science, Physical Education, English Language Development, Career Technical Education, Health Education, World Languages, and Visual and Performing Arts. These standards are developed by the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) through a public process, and are adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE).

These standards form the basis of California’s curriculum frameworks. The frameworks guide the implementation of these standards, and are used to establish criteria for the evaluation of

instructional materials for state adoption for grades kindergarten through grade eight. They also guide district selection of instructional materials for grades nine through twelve.

In addition to developing standards in the above subject areas, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) has been directed by law to develop model curricula on different topics, such as those on the life of Cesar Chavez, human rights and genocide, and ethnic studies, for voluntary use by educators.

What is media literacy? According to the National Association for Media Literacy Education, media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms.

The Center for Media Literacy offers another definition: “Media literacy empowers people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages using image, language, and sound. It is the skillful application of literacy skills to media and technology messages.”

What does media literacy education look like? The CDE lists the following examples of media literacy activities in different grade spans on its website:

- Elementary students use a library catalog to locate a book on recycling, which informs their task of photographing examples of recycling in their neighborhoods to share on their class wiki. In this example, students are accessing information through the library catalog, using it to inform their task. They are then using media to share information through photography on their class wiki—this involves production, communication, and following norms of online behavior with digital citizenship.
- Middle schoolers use a spreadsheet to organize data they collect about pets’ exercise habits, which they will analyze for a science fair project. In this example, students are using technology to use information effectively. They are then analyzing that information to arrive at conclusions for a project—that project will involve further skills in communication of that information to a particular audience.
- High schoolers locate articles in a database about data privacy, which is the basis for the students’ video production that gives recommendations for teens to protect personal information. In this example, students are accessing information through the database, and then analyzing that information to produce a video, involving communication skills. The topic is data privacy, which includes elements of digital citizenship.

Three additional examples of media literacy lessons from publicly available curricula are shown below:

- Through the Media Smarts curriculum (in use in Canada) students in Kindergarten to third grade can learn how to identify advertising through a lesson titled “Can you spot the ad?” with the objective of teaching students about the concept of branded content, and differences between branded and non-branded images and videos in online and offline contexts.
- Through the Cyber Civics curriculum for middle school students, students learn the difference between “consuming” and “producing” media, how to read and create visual media and become less susceptible to visual manipulations, receive safety training related to

the consequences of “sexting,” and learn how misinformation can spread via the Internet and social media and even find its way into the news.

- Through the Facing History and Ourselves media literacy unit titled “Facing Ferguson: News Literacy in a Digital Age,” high school students investigate the choices and challenges facing journalists as they report on a story, explore the impact of social media on the traditional news cycle and understand the role it can play in influencing public opinion and the press, develop critical thinking and news literacy skills to help students find reliable information to make decisions, take action, and responsibly share news through social media, and consider their role as citizens in a democracy and their responsibilities as civic participants and citizen watchdogs.

Information literacy in California Model School Library standards. The California Model School Library Standards for California Schools, adopted by the SBE in 2011, incorporate “information literacy” skills, in which students “learn to access, evaluate, use, and integrate information and ideas found in print, media, and digital resources, enabling them to function in a knowledge-based economy and technologically oriented society.” “Information” is defined broadly to include words (whether printed or spoken), visual images (including photographs and artwork), and music.

The standards are organized into four concepts (accessing, evaluating, using, and integrating information) which contain standards spanning all of the grades. In the area of evaluating information, students are expected to be able to determine the relevance of information; assess the comprehensiveness, currency, credibility, authority, and accuracy of resources; and consider the need for additional information.

The state’s content standards for English Language Arts students also include at least one reference to media literacy. In grades 9 -12 students are expected to learn to “Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.”

Media literacy resources listed on CDE website. This bill proposes to require the California State Librarian to develop a list of recommended books, articles, digital multimedia resources, and any other instructional materials on media literacy to supplement the state English language arts curriculum framework.

Pursuant to SB 830 (Dodd), Chapter 448, Statutes of 2018, the CDE has listed on its website resources and instructional materials on media literacy, including media literacy professional development programs for teachers. This list includes ten curriculum resources, eleven resources for professional development, and five resources for media production.

Recommended Committee amendments. Staff recommends the bill be amended to remove any proposed responsibilities of the State Library to develop or identify media literacy resources for schools, and instead require that these activities be carried out for the benefit of individuals, and county and municipal libraries.

Related and prior legislation. AB 2284 (Gabriel) of the 2021-22 Session would establish a grant program, administered by the CDE, for the purpose of supporting media literacy and digital literacy through LEA leadership teams.

SB 830 (Dodd), Chapter 448, Statutes of 2018, requires the CDE to make available to school districts on its website a list of resources and instructional materials on media literacy, including media literacy professional development programs for teachers.

SB 135 (Dodd) of the 2017-18 Session would have required the IQC to develop, and the SBE to adopt, reject, or modify, a model curriculum in media literacy. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

SB 155 (Gomez) of the 2017-18 Session would have required the IQC to develop a model curriculum in media literacy, and would have required the CDE to develop an online professional development module to support the model curriculum. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

SB 203 (Jackson) of the 2017-18 Session would have required the CDE to identify best practices and recommendations for instruction in digital citizenship, Internet safety, and media literacy, and would have required, beginning in the 2019–20 school year, school districts to annually review their policies on those topics. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

SB 947 (Jackson) of the 2017-18 Session would have required the SPI, in consultation with an advisory committee, to identify best practices and recommendations for instruction in digital citizenship, internet safety, and media literacy. This bill was vetoed by the Governor, who stated:

The subject matter of this bill is more properly the responsibility of local school districts. Moreover, the topics covered here are already contained in our state's English Language and Social Science Frameworks or in the K-12 Model Library Standards.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

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